WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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April 25, 1978

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Without getting into the substance of your proposal to sell sophisticated aircraft to Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt, we write to address the issue of the timing of the Administration's request to the Congress to authorize a new arms "package."

There is no doubt that the proposal will face an intensive and divisive debate in the Senate where the outcome is uncertain. Indeed, there are strong indications that a majority of the Senate will vote to disapprove at least one of the proposed sales. We share what we believe to be the overwhelming sentiment of the Senate that the package not now be presented for debate and decision.

Our national effort would be far better directed toward encouraging a peace between Israel and Egypt, to reinforcing the promising elements of the Sadat-Begin dialogue and to bringing those negotiations to a favorable conclusion. Were the proposed arms sales presented to the Congress following a peace between Israel and Egypt, there is no doubt that it would receive favorable consideration in the Congress.

Approval by the Congress with a consensus rather than the probable rejection of part of the package after a bitter controversy is clearly in the national interest. A delay would facilitate an intensified negotiation effort.

Once a peace agreement has been reached, the Congressional attitude toward the provision of sophisticated weapons to the parties would be very different from what it is today. In the aftermath of a peace agreement, the atmosphere in which the arms proposals would be considered would be far more conducive to the outcome you desire.

For all these reasons we believe that a delay of a few months is essential. It would provide additional time and additional incentives for the realization of a peace accord. It would spare the country and

our friends in the Middle East a debate certain to be marked by bitterness and contention. We hope that you will give serious consideration to this proposal; and we stand ready, individually, to assist in the efforts to bring about a peace in the Middle East.

Sincerely,

Henry M. Jackson, U.S.S.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, U.S.S.

Sam Nunn, U.S.S.